

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 325 025

HE 023 942

TITLE Attitudes About American Colleges 1990. A Survey
Commissioned for National Higher Education Week.

INSTITUTION Gallup Organization, Inc., Princeton, N.J.

SPONS AGENCY Council for Advancement and Support of Education,
Washington, D.C.

PUB DATE 12 Oct 90

NOTE 32p.; For the 1989 report, see ED 311 988.

AVAILABLE FROM Council for Advancement and Support of Education,
Suite 400, 11 Dupont Circle, Washington, DC 20036
(free).

PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Adults; Attitude Measures; Audience Response;
Educational Needs; *Higher Education; *Paying for
College; *Public Opinion; *Role of Education;
*Student Financial Aid; Telephone Surveys

IDENTIFIERS United States

ABSTRACT

A Gallup report presents the results and conclusions of a study designed to measure attitudes and perceptions among the nation's adults regarding higher education. The specific issues addressed cover the benefits of a college education to society at large, the focus of institutions of higher education, financial support of higher education institutions, and financial aid. The study, conducted in June 1990, involved 1,014 telephone interviews among a nationally representative sample of adults age 18 years and older. Among the study's findings are the following: (1) 75% felt that significant advancements in medicine and technology required more people attaining a college education; (2) 58% felt that having more college educated people would improve society's ability to solve problem areas such as crime, drug abuse, and homelessness; (3) conducting research and offering programs and financial assistance were areas believed to be needing more financial support; (4) 91% felt most students require financial aid in order to attend college; (5) 4% believed that what students borrow is too little; and (5) 66% believe financial aid from the federal government should be based on academic ability and financial need. A technical appendix accompanies the report. (GLR)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

HE

For release:
OCTOBER 12, 1990

ED325025

HE 023 942

Attitudes About American Colleges 1990

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

CASE

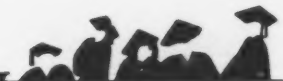
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OEIR position or policy.



**NATIONAL
HIGHER
EDUCATION
WEEK**

*A survey commissioned by the
Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)
for National Higher Education Week*

Attitudes About American Colleges 1990

Prepared by:

THE GALLUP ORGANIZATION
100 Palmer Square, Suite 200
47 Hulfish Street
Princeton, NJ 08542

*A survey commissioned by the
Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)
for National Higher Education Week*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Methodology	1
Summary Report	2
Technical Appendix	13
Sample Composition	14
Design of the Sample	15
Sampling Tolerances	18
Questionnaire with Results	23

INTRODUCTION

This is a report on the findings of a national survey commissioned by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and conducted by The Gallup Organization, Inc. The study was specifically designed to measure attitudes and perceptions among the nation's adults regarding higher education. The specific issues covered in this survey include:

- Benefits of a college education to society at large
- Focus of institutions of higher education
- Financial support of higher education institutions
- Financial aid

METHODOLOGY

This survey is based on 1,014 telephone interviews among a nationally representative sample of adults, age 18 years and older. Interviewing for the survey took place between June 11, 1990 and June 17, 1990. The margin of error associated with this survey is plus or minus 4 percentage points. A more detailed description of the sample composition, design of the sample, sampling tolerance tables and questionnaire with overall results can be found in the technical appendix of this report.

SUMMARY REPORT

Benefits of a College Education

A majority of Americans see many different benefits to society at large from a better educated populace. Three-fourths (75%) of the public believe significant advancements in the areas of medicine and technology could be accomplished if more people in this country obtained a college education. Six in ten adults (58%) feel that having a greater number of college educated adults would dramatically improve society's ability to solve social problems like crime, drugs and homelessness, as well as maintain our country's competitive position in the world economy (59%). Fewer than one in six adults feel that little or no improvements in any of these areas would result from a more highly educated public.

Societal Benefits of a Better Educated Population

I'd like you to think about some ways society might benefit if more Americans were able to get a college education. If more Americans were able to get a college education, do you think there would be a big improvement, some improvement or little improvement toward...

	Big Improve- <u>ment</u>	Some Improve- <u>ment</u>	Little or No Improve- <u>ment</u>
Advancements in science, medicine, and technology	75	19	4
The U.S.'s ability to compete economically with the rest of the world	59	28	10
Solving social problems like crime, drugs, and homelessness	58	25	15

Adults residing in the Southern part of the nation are more likely than adults living in other parts of the nation to feel that big improvements would be made in all three of these areas if more people were able to obtain a college education. Further analysis of these data reveals a strong relationship between race and opinion on improvements as a result of obtaining a college degree. Specifically, non-white respondents are more likely than whites to believe society would benefit dramatically in the areas of solving social problems and maintaining economic competitiveness by having a better educated public. Another important variable is gender. Women are more likely than men to believe big improvements would also occur in the area of social problems if more Americans received a college degree.

Big Improvements if More Americans Received a College Degree

	<u>Advancements in Science</u>	<u>Economic Competi- tiveness</u>	<u>Solving Social Problems</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Total Adults	75	59	58
<u>Sex</u>			
Male	76	61	54
Female	76	58	62
<u>Race</u>			
White	75	58	56
Non-white	75	71	72
<u>Region</u>			
South	82	67	66
Rest of country	72	56	55

A majority of adults surveyed believe that institutions of higher education in the United States play a very important role in a number of different areas. One of the top priorities is in research. Nearly two-thirds of the nation's adults (64%) report that conducting research to help solve medical, scientific, social, and other national problems is one of the most important activities in which colleges and universities are currently

engaged. Six in ten adults (60%) believe the role colleges play in providing continuing education for adults of all ages and offering programs and financial assistance to people who might otherwise be unable to attend college is of vital importance. A majority of the respondents suggest that providing job training opportunities for adults of all ages (56%) and the more traditional role of educating young adults (51%) are of utmost importance to our country's institutions of higher education.

No demographic differences in opinion are found in the proportions of adults who contend that the traditional approach of educating adults between the ages of 18 and 22 years is one of the most important roles that colleges play. Sub-groups differences, however, are found in the four other areas examined. In all four of the other areas, non-white adults are more likely than whites to find the role institutions of higher education play is of the utmost importance. When considering perceptions of the job colleges are doing in the areas of continuing education and financial assistance, differences are found among many segments of the population. Specifically, women (64%), adults younger than 50 years of age (65%), parents with children under the age of 18 (64%), and those from households with annual earnings of less than \$50,000 (61%) are all more likely than their counterparts to believe providing continuing education is one of the most important roles colleges can play today. Adults most likely to feel that offering programs and financial assistance is a top priority for institutions of higher education include adults who themselves did not graduate from college (63%), and those from households with earnings of less than \$50,000 yearly (61%). In addition, self-identified Democrats are more likely than self-identified Republicans to report that financial assistance is a key role for colleges to play. Perhaps not surprising is the fact that adults from less affluent households (less than \$30,000 annually) and those who did not graduate from college are more likely than their more affluent and higher educated counterparts to report that job training is one of the most important roles colleges can play. These data suggest that the performance of colleges and universities in the area of job training is of greater importance to those who would be most likely to benefit from such services. And finally, self-identified Democrats (59%) are slightly more likely than Republicans (52%) to hold this view of the role colleges play in the area of job training.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AREAS FOR COLLEGES

	<u>Conducting Research</u>	<u>Continuing Education</u>	<u>Financial Assistance</u>	<u>Job Training</u>	<u>N</u>
	%	%	%	%	
Total	64	60	60	56	(1014)
<u>Sex</u>					
Male	64	55	57	52	(510)
Female	65	64	62	59	(504)
<u>Race</u>					
White	63	58	58	55	(884)
Non-white	76	75	69	64	(122)
<u>Age</u>					
18-29	67	65	63	59	(284)
30-49	66	66	58	56	(415)
50 and older	61	50	60	54	(299)
<u>Education</u>					
College grad.	65	56	48	44	(302)
Other college	68	62	57	56	(222)
H.S. grad.	63	59	64	59	(357)
Less than h.s. grad.	62	61	67	62	(128)
<u>Income</u>					
\$50,000 or more	66	50	50	47	(150)
\$30,000-\$49,999	65	60	57	51	(314)
\$20,000-\$29,999	66	65	66	65	(193)
Less than \$20,000	61	59	63	57	(250)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>					
Republican	62	61	55	52	(321)
Democrat	63	59	64	59	(325)
Independent/Other	67	58	59	55	(351)
<u>Parental Status</u>					
Children under 18	68	64	63	58	(404)
No children under 18	62	57	58	55	(605)

Not only do adults tend to think colleges and universities in this country play an important role in a number of important areas, they would also like to see more money spent in each of the areas examined. If more money were to become available to colleges and universities, more than seven in ten adults would like to see at least some of that money spent in all of these areas. A plurality of the nation's adults would prefer the largest portions of that money go to financial assistance programs (48%) and research projects dealing with medical, social and scientific problems (45%). Fewer adults, however, would like to see the bulk of the money spent on educating adults between 18 and 22 years of age to be contributing members of society (38%), providing job training opportunities for all (36%) or offering continuing education for adults of all ages (33%).

As was found on the previous question, race is a key variable in understanding opinion toward financial support for various programs at colleges and universities. Non-white adults are more likely than whites to want large segments of additional funds be spent in all five of the areas examined. These data suggest that adults most likely to benefit from financial assistance programs are disproportionately more likely than those who may not have as great a need, to want this area to receive heavy financial backing. These groups include parents with children under the age of 18 (52%), adults from households with annual earnings of less than \$30,000 (52%), young adults under the age of 30 (59%), and non-white adults (64%).

The same pattern emerges when examining opinion toward continuing education and job training. Non-white adults (52%), those who did not graduate from college (34%), and those from households with annual earnings of less than \$50,000 (34%) are all more likely than their counterparts to prefer the majority of additional funds be spent on continuing education programs for adults of all ages. Non-white adults (53%), and those earning less than \$30,000 yearly (40%) are also disproportionately more likely than whites (53%) and the more affluent (32%) to favor spending most of the additional money on job training programs.

The demographic groups within the population who want a substantial amount of the additional funds to be spent on research include those who did not graduate from college (47%), those from households with less than \$50,000 in annual earnings (47%), and non-white adults (54%). Only two sub-groups are distinguished by their greater likelihood of wanting most of the money spent on educating young adults to be good citizens -- non-whites (53%) and self-identified Democrats (44%). Differences in opinion are found

when examining responses to this question regionally. Adults residing in the Western part of the country are less likely than adults living in other parts of the nation to feel most of the money should be spent in either continuing education (West=26% vs. rest of country=35%) or research (West=39% vs. rest of country=47%).

The two areas that the nation's adults believe are of utmost importance for institutions of higher education are also the two areas that pluralities of adults would like schools to spend most of their additional money -- conducting research and offering programs and financial assistance. Providing continuing education receives relatively little support in terms of spending, if additional monies become available. Although adults feel that this is an important role for colleges to play, they do not feel that a large proportion of additional monies should be spent on such programs.

WHERE SCHOOLS SHOULD SPEND MOST OF THE ADDITIONAL MONEY

	Financial Assistance Programs	Conducting Research	Educating 18 to 22 Year-Olds	Job Training	Continuing Education	N
	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	48	45	38	36	33	(1014)
<u>Sex</u>						
Male	47	46	38	33	30	(510)
Female	49	45	38	39	35	(504)
<u>Race</u>						
White	46	44	35	34	30	(884)
Non-white	64	54	53	53	52	(122)
<u>Age</u>						
18-29	59	46	35	36	37	(284)
30-49	46	45	40	38	33	(415)
50 and over	40	45	37	35	29	(299)
<u>Education</u>						
College grad.	43	37	40	32	26	(302)
Other college	49	47	39	37	32	(222)
H.S. grad.	50	48	36	39	35	(357)
Less than h.s. grad.	46	49	38	44	36	(128)
<u>Income</u>						
\$50,000 or more	44	33	38	32	22	(150)
\$30,000-\$49,999	45	46	39	32	32	(314)
\$20,000-\$29,999	54	48	39	41	37	(193)
Less than \$20,000	51	48	34	39	35	(250)
<u>Region</u>						
East	46	44	41	34	36	(247)
Midwest	50	44	40	35	34	(259)
South	48	52	35	39	34	(307)
West	49	39	36	37	25	(198)
<u>Parental Status</u>						
Kids under 18	52	48	39	38	36	(404)
No kids under 18	45	44	37	36	30	(605)

Further analysis of these data finds that nearly half (48%) believe that the largest amount of additional funding to support special programs should come from private donations. About three in ten (29%) feel the funds should be raised through taxation -- with one in six (15%) preferring increases in tuition payments from people attending colleges and universities.

Only one demographic difference in opinion emerges in the preference that additional funds come from private donations. Adults living in the East (54%) are more likely than those living in other parts of the country (46%) to suggest private donations as the main funding source for additional monies. Differences in attitudes toward taxes as the primary source are found based on race and age. Non-whites (42%) and adults younger than 50 (31%) are more likely than whites (27%) and older Americans (24%) to suggest taxes as the means for raising additional funds.

Adults who do mention taxes as the main funding source clearly prefer that the money comes from federal taxes (57%) over either a state (28%) or local taxes (11%). Southerners are less likely than adults residing in other regions of the nation to prefer the money comes from federal taxes (47% vs. 62%). No other sub-group differences are found in response to this question.

Overall, Americans think the cost of higher education is unmanageable without some form of financial assistance. Fully nine in 10 (91%) think it is not possible today for most people to go to college without receiving some form of financial aid. Those most likely to say financial aid is necessary include Americans under the age of 50, (94%), those who did not receive a college degree (92%), people living in households with earnings of less than \$50,000 (91%), and parents with school age children (96%). People living in the West are less likely than people living elsewhere to believe financial aid is a necessity for most students today (85% vs. 92%). The sentiment that most people must seek financial aid to attend college helps to explain why only 15 percent of the nation's adults suggest that additional funds should come from tuition increases.

AFFORD TO GO TO COLLEGE TODAY WITHOUT FINANCIAL AID

(Percent saying "no")

	<u>NO</u>
	%
Total	91
<u>Race</u>	
White	90
Non-white	95
<u>Age</u>	
18-29	96
30-49	93
50 and older	84
<u>Education</u>	
College grad.	86
Other college	92
H.S. grad.	94
Less than h.s. grad.	91
<u>Income</u>	
\$50,000 or more	86
\$30,000-\$49,999	92
\$20,000-\$29,999	94
Less than \$20,000	90
<u>Parental Status</u>	
Children under 18	96
No children under 18	88

Not only is there the perception that most students need financial aid, a majority also believe the loan burden most students must bear is too high. Three in five (60%) adults nationwide think the amount most students need to borrow to attend college is too high, even in the context of the worth of a college education over an entire lifetime. About half as many (28%) feel the loan burden is about right given the value of a college education. Virtually no one (4%) believes what students borrow is too little.

A majority of all demographic groups examined think the loan burden is too great, however, adults under the age of 50 (64%) and those with at least a high school degree (62%) are particularly likely to hold this view. In addition, those adults who believe financial aid is necessary to attend college are nearly twice as likely as those who disagree to feel the loan burden students must carry is too high (63% vs. 33%).

The public is generally supportive of changing federal government policy to include academic promise as a criterion when distributing financial aid. Two-thirds (66%) believe that if the federal government is to give out additional aid it should be based on both academic ability and financial need. One in five (20%) prefer the current system which is based solely on financial need, with about half as many (11%) voicing a preference for additional aid being based strictly on academic potential.

Adults who are disproportionately more likely to prefer a combination of academic ability and financial need include whites (69%), those under the age of 50 (71%), adults who have completed high school (73%), those living in households where annual incomes are at least \$20,000 (75%), and those who consider themselves as either Republican or Independent (71%). Adults who did not finish high school (28%), those from less affluent households (under \$20,000=24%) and Democrats (25%) are more likely than their counterparts to favor the current system of financial need only as the basis for giving out federal aid. Older Americans (over the age of 50=16%) and those who did not graduate from high school (20%) are particularly likely to endorse a new approach based solely on academic potential. No differences in opinion are found on this question based on opinion toward the necessity of financial assistance to attend college nor the perceived loan burden.

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

	<u>Solely Financial Need</u> %	<u>Academic & Financial Need</u> %	<u>Solely Academic Ability</u> %	<u>N</u>
Total	20	66	11	(1014)
<u>Race</u>				
White	19	69	9	(884)
Non-white	25	51	19	(122)
<u>Age</u>				
18-29	23	68	8	(284)
30-49	17	74	8	(415)
50 and over	19	58	16	(299)
<u>Education</u>				
College graduate	14	76	8	(302)
Other college	17	74	8	(222)
H.S. graduate	20	70	9	(357)
Less than h.s. graduate	28	40	20	(128)
<u>Income</u>				
\$50,000 or more	11	75	11	(150)
\$30,000-\$49,999	16	76	6	(314)
\$20,000-\$29,999	20	73	7	(193)
Less than \$20,000	24	54	17	(250)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>				
Republican	17	72	10	(321)
Democrat	25	60	70	(325)
Independent/Other	10	12	9	(351)

TECHNICAL APPENDIX

SAMPLE COMPOSITION

	<u>Weighted Percentages</u>	<u>Number of Interviews</u>
	%	#
TOTAL	100.0	1014
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	47.3	510
Female	<u>52.7</u>	<u>504</u>
	100.0	1,014
<u>Age</u>		
18-29	26.7	284
30-49	38.8	415
50 and older	32.9	299
Undesignated	<u>1.6</u>	<u>16</u>
	100.0	1,014
<u>Education</u>		
College graduate	22.0	302
Other college	19.3	222
High school graduate	39.6	357
Less than high school graduate	18.5	128
Undesignated	<u>.6</u>	<u>5</u>
	100.0	1,014
<u>Race</u>		
White	86.1	884
Non-white	13.0	122
Undesignated	<u>.9</u>	<u>8</u>
	100.0	1,014
<u>Region</u>		
East	24.7	247
Midwest	24.9	259
South	30.1	307
West	20.0	198
Undesignated	<u>.3</u>	<u>3</u>
	100.0	1,014

DESIGN OF THE SAMPLE

The Gallup Organization's standard national telephone samples are unclustered random digit dial (RDD) samples purchased from Survey Sampling, Incorporated, and are based on a proportionate stratified sampling design.

The random digit aspect of the sample is used to avoid "listing" bias. According to the most recent estimates from the Bureau of the Census, there are 91 million households in the United States, and just over 92% of them contain one or more telephones. Telephone directories only list about 71% of such "telephone households," and numerous studies have shown that households with unlisted telephone numbers are different in several important ways from listed households. Moreover, nearly 15% of listed telephone numbers are "discontinued" due to household mobility and directory publishing lag, and it is reasonable to assume that a roughly equal number are working residential numbers too new to be found in published directories.

In order to avoid these various sources of bias, a random digit procedure designed to provide representation of both listed and unlisted (including not-yet-listed) numbers is used. The design of the sample ensures this representation by random generation of the last two digits of telephone numbers selected on the basis of their area code, telephone exchange (the first three digits of a seven digit telephone number), and bank number (the fourth and fifth digits).

The selection procedure produces a sample that is superior to random selection from a frame of listed telephone households, and the superiority is greater to the degree that the assignment of telephone numbers to households is made independently of their publication status in the directory. That is, if unlisted numbers tend to be found in the same telephone banks as listed numbers and if, in general, banks containing relatively few listed numbers also contain relatively few unlisted numbers, then the sample that results from the procedure described below will represent unlisted telephone households fully as well as it represents listed households. Random number selection within banks ensures that all numbers within a particular bank (whether listed or unlisted) have the same likelihood of inclusion in the sample, and that the sample so generated will represent listed and unlisted telephone households in the appropriate proportions.

A database of listed telephone numbers for the continental United States is first stratified into 4 regions of the country and, within region, telephone numbers are further stratified into three size-of-community strata: (a) incorporated cities of population 1,000,000 and over; (b) incorporated cities of population 250,000 to 999,999; and (c) the remainder of the continental United States. Separate samples are drawn from each of the resulting 12 region/ size-of-community strata. The first eight digits of the sample telephone numbers (area code, telephone exchange, and bank number) are then selected after further geographic pre-stratification of this database so that within each region and size-of-community stratum, state, county, and telephone exchange within county are all represented in their appropriate proportions. That is, the number of telephone numbers randomly sampled from within a given exchange is proportional to that exchange's share of listed telephone households in the set of exchanges from which the sample is drawn.

Only working banks of numbers are selected. A working bank is defined as 100 contiguous telephone numbers containing three or more residential telephone listings. By eliminating non-working banks of numbers from the sample, the likelihood that any sampled telephone number will be associated with a residence increases from only 20% (where all banks of numbers are sampled) to between 60% and 70%.

The sample of telephone numbers produced by this method is thus designed to produce an unbiased random sampling of telephone households in the continental United States.

Quotas for completed interviews within each of the 12 strata are set proportionate to the distribution of continental United States telephone households in the twelve areas.

Within each contacted household, an interview is sought with the youngest man 18 years or older who is at home. If no man is at home, an interview is sought with the oldest woman at home. In addition, a quota is set so that 50% of completed interviews in each of the 12 areas are male and 50% are female. This method of respondent selection within households produces an age distribution by sex that closely approximates the age by sex distribution of the total population.

Up to three calls are made to each selected telephone number in order to complete an interview. The time of day and the day of the week for callbacks is varied so as to

maximize the chances of finding a respondent at home. All interviews are conducted on weekends or weekday evenings so that potential respondents who work full-time can be contacted.

The final sample is weighted so that the region by age by sex by education distribution and the region by sex by race distribution of the sample matches current estimates derived from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) for the adult population living in telephone households in the continental U.S.

SAMPLING TOLERANCES

In interpreting survey results, it should be borne in mind that all sample surveys are subject to sampling error, that is, the extent to which the results may differ from what would be obtained if the whole population surveyed had been interviewed. The size of such sampling errors depends largely on the number of interviews.

The following tables may be used in estimating the sampling error of any percentage in this report. The computed allowances have taken into account the effect of the sample design upon sampling error. They may be interpreted as indicating the range (plus or minus the figure shown) within which the results of repeated samplings in the same time period could be expected to vary, 95 percent of the time, assuming the same sampling procedure, the same interviewers, and the same questionnaire.

The first table shows how much allowance should be made for the sampling error of a percentage:

Recommended Allowance For Sampling Error Error of a Percentage

In Percentage Points
(At 95 in 100 Confidence Level)*

	-----Sampling Size-----					
	<u>1014</u>	<u>900</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>200</u>
Percentages near 10	2	2	3	3	4	5
Percentages near 20	3	3	4	4	5	6
Percentages near 30	3	3	4	5	6	7
Percentages near 40	3	4	5	5	6	7
Percentages near 50	3	4	5	5	6	8
Percentages near 60	3	4	5	5	6	7
Percentages near 70	3	3	4	5	6	7
Percentages near 80	3	3	4	4	5	6
Percentages near 90	2	2	3	3	4	5

The table would be used in the following manner: Let us say a reported percentage is 43 for a group which includes 1014 respondents. Then we go to row "percentages near 40" in the table and go across to the column headed "1014." The number at this point is 3 which means that the 43 percent obtained in the sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 3 points. Another way of saying it is that very probably (95 chances out of 100) the average of repeated sampling would be somewhere between 40 and 46 with the most likely figure the 43 obtained.

In comparing survey results in two samples, for example, men and women, the question arises as to how large must a difference between them be before one can be reasonably sure that it reflects a real difference. In the tables below, the number of points which must be allowed for in such comparisons is as indicated.

Two tables are provided. One is for percentages near 20 or 80; the others for percentages near 50. For percentages in between, the error to be allowed for is between those shown in the two tables:

Recommended Allowance For Sampling Error
Of The Differences

In Percentage Points
(at 95 in 100 confidence level)*

Table A Percentages near 20 or percentages near 80

Size of Sample	<u>1014</u>	<u>900</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>200</u>
1014	4					
900	4	4				
500	5	5	5			
400	5	5	6	6		
300	6	6	6	7	7	
200	7	7	7	7	8	9

Table B

Percentages near 50

Size of Sample	<u>1014</u>	<u>900</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>200</u>
1014	5					
900	5	5				
500	6	6	7			
400	6	6	7	8		
300	7	7	8	8	9	
200	8	8	9	9	10	11

Here is an example of how the tables would be used: Let us say that 40 percent of men respond a certain way and 50 percent of women respond that way also, for a difference of 10 percentage points between them. Can we say with any assurance that the 10-point difference reflects a real difference between men and women on the question? The sample contains approximately 500 men and 500 women.

Since the percentages are near 50, we consult Table B, and since the two samples are about 500 persons each, we look for the number in the column headed "500" which is also in the row designated "500". We find the number 7 here. This means that the allowance for error should be 7 points, and that in concluding that the percentage among men is somewhere between 3 and 17 points higher than the percentage among women we should be wrong only about 5 percent of the time. In other words, we can conclude with considerable confidence that a difference exists in the direction and that it amounts to at least 3 percentage points.

If, in another case, male responses amount to 22 percent, say, and female to 24 percent, we consult Table A because these percentages are near 20. We look in the column headed "500" and see that the number is 5. Obviously, then, the 2-point difference is inconclusive.

TOP LINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Number of Interviews = 1014

Margin of Error $\pm$ 4

Dates of Interviewing - June 11, 1990 through June 17, 1990

1. I'd like you to think about some ways society might benefit if more Americans were able to get a college education. If more Americans were able to get a college education, do you think there would be a big improvement, some improvement or little improvement toward (INSERT ITEM)

	-VOL-				
	Big	Some	Little	No	
	Improve-	Improve-	Improve-	Improve-	Don't
	<u>ment</u>	<u>ment</u>	<u>ment</u>	<u>ment</u>	<u>Know</u>
a. Solving social problems like crime, drugs, and homelessness	58	25	11	4	~~2=10~~
b. The U.S.'s ability to compete economically with the rest of the world	59	28	7	3	~~3=10~~
c. Advancements in science, medicine, and technology	75	19	3	1	~~2=10~~

2. How important a role do you think colleges and universities are playing in each of the following areas. Is (INSERT ITEM) one of the most important things that colleges are currently doing, important but not one of the most important, or isn't it too important. What about ...

	Most <u>Import.</u>	Some- what <u>Import.</u>	Not too <u>Import.</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>
a. Educating 18 to 22 year-olds to be contributing members of society	51	40	5	4=100
b. Providing job training opportunities for adults of all ages	56	32	10	2=100
c. Conducting research to help solve medical, scientific, social, and other national problems	64	29	5	2=100
d. Providing continuing education for adults of all ages	60	34	5	1=100
e. Offering programs and financial assistance to people who otherwise couldn't go to college	60	29	9	2=100

3. Next, I'd like your opinion about how colleges and universities should spend money in the areas I just mentioned. If colleges and universities received additional money, how much should they spend on (INSERT ITEM). Should schools spend most of the additional money in this area, spend some of the additional money in this area, or is it your impression that the amount of money now being spent in this area is about right?

	Spend <u>Most</u>	Spend <u>Some</u>	Level About <u>Right</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>
a. Educating 18 to 22 year-olds to be contributing members of society	38	34	21	7=100
b. Providing job training opportunities for adults of all ages	36	42	17	5=100
c. Conducting research to help solve medical, scientific, social, and other national problems	45	37	13	5=100
d. Providing continuing education for adults of all ages	33	44	20	3=100
e. Offering programs and financial assistance to people who otherwise couldn't go to college	48	37	11	4=100

4. If additional funding is needed to support the programs that I just mentioned, where should the largest share of that money come from -- taxes, tuition payments from individuals attending colleges and universities or donations from other individuals and corporations? (ACCEPT ONLY ONE ANSWER).

29 1 Taxes - ASK Q. 5

15 2 Tuition payments from individuals attending
 colleges and universities -GO TO Q. 6

48 3 Donations from other individuals
 and corporations-GO TO Q. 6

3 4 SOMEONE ELSE MENTIONED-GO TO Q. 6

* 5 NO ONE SHOULD PAY, DON'T THINK THESE
 PROGRAMS ARE NECESSARY - VOL.-GO TO Q. 6

5 6 DON'T KNOW-GO TO Q. 6
100

5. Which kind of tax would you prefer as the main funding source -- federal taxes, state taxes or local taxes? (ACCEPT ONLY ONE ANSWER. IF RESPONDENT MENTIONS MORE THAN ONE TAX ASK: Which one of the taxes should supply the largest share of the money?)

N=285 (Based on those who said taxes in question 4)

57	1	Federal taxes
28	2	State taxes
11	3	Local taxes
<u>4</u>	4	DON'T KNOW
100		

ASK ALL:

6. Do you think most people can afford to go to college today without financial aid, or not?

7	1	Yes, can go to college without financial aid
91	2	No, must get financial aid to go to college
<u>2</u>	3	DON'T KNOW
100		

7. Thinking about the worth of a college education over a lifetime, do you think the amount most students need to borrow to attend college is too high, too low or about right?

60	1	Too high
4	2	Too low
28	3	About right
<u>8</u>	4	DON'T KNOW
100		

8. Currently, the federal government gives out most student aid based on financial need. If the federal government is to give out additional financial aid, how should it be decided who receives it? Should the additional aid be given out based only on financial need as it is today, based both on academic ability and financial need, or should it be based solely on academic ability?

20	1	Solely on financial need
66	2	Academic ability and financial need
11	3	Solely on academic ability
1	4	NEITHER - VOLUNTEERED
<u>2</u>	5	DON'T KNOW
100		

NOTES



Council for Advancement and Support of Education
Suite 400
11 Dupont Circle
Washington, DC 20036